

SELECTMEN AND INTERLAKES SCHOOL BOARD JOINT MEETING
Minutes of 06/07/04

Selectmen:

Frank Michel, Chairperson
Robert C. Flanders
Peter Miller

Town Manager:

Carol M. Granfield

Administrative Assistant:

Wynette DeGroot

Call to Order: 6:12 p.m.

**Roll Call: Introduction of InterLakes School Board Members and Selectmen Board Members
by giving a brief individual introduction:**

Frank Michel, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, Robert Flanders, Wynette DeGroot, Administrative Assistant, Carol Granfield, Town Manager, Howard Cunningham, Richard Hanson, Peter Miller, Paula Adriance, Chairperson, Julian Shlager, John Carty, Diane Drenkhahn, Trish Temperino, Assistant Superintendent for Business Operations, Dr. Scott Andersen, Superintendent of Schools.

The discussion was led by Frank Michel indicating the purpose of the meeting was a result of a letter that was written to the School Board by the Selectmen regarding the appointment of two members to the Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) that was inaugurated last year. Paula Adriance indicted the desire to meet and have a joint meeting to discuss the contents of the letter.

Frank Michel explained the Select Boards way of operation and their aspect of using advisory committees and sub committees, which, as an observation, may not be the way the School Board operates.

Frank gave a brief historical perspective of the FAC and that it should consist of two members from the Town of Meredith, one from Sandwich, one from Center Harbor and one from the School Board. On a May 13th meeting, the School Board then appointed something different from the original being two members from each town, one member at large and one student appointed by the principal. Thereafter, the FAC was put in place with a slightly different mission. March of 2004 the FAC all resigned due to not being used properly.

Frank stated that whatever happened didn't work and he feels this group could be reengaged to start a fresh FAC with some reassurances of direction of the committee.

Paula Adriance reviewed the information from the FAC meetings and also emphasized the need for fostering cooperation and a mutual respect between the groups.

Bob Flanders stated his disappointment by the past process and that he would like to see if the Board of Selectmen could set a direction (charge) for the committee and report back to the Board in a timely manner with recommendations. Bob stated his frustration with the budget process also. He would like some reassurance of a meaningful format with a definitive charge for the FAC.

Julian Shlager discussed the need to define the items of concern and select the committee to work on that particular item.

Paula Adriance stated the school budget is difficult to understand and the group could not focus due to the lack of understanding of the budget.

John Carty indicated the need of the FAC to be broken down to specific areas and identify those areas in which to work on with the expertise of those members.

Richard Hanson commented on the professional staff that is hired by the School Board to do a job. Those people who are hired report to the School Board and there is a difference in the way the Select Board has volunteers to be on different sub-committees.

Peter Miller feels that much could be delegated to the public and the School Board could function more like town government. FAC was a precious idea and it is an attempt to reach out to the public. He is concerned that history will repeat itself. He hopes the original members can help make a new FAC successful. He asks how many school board members will be on the FAC and what is the charge?

Paula Adriance discussed the number of Inter Lakes Board members, which comprised of one School Board member from each community and Administrators on the committee especially to assist with the understanding of the budget.

Frank Michel reviewed the minutes of May 13, 2003 to form a Budgetary Advisory Committee made up of the same as the school board, two members from each town, one at large and one student. The vote was unanimous. The parameters will be; 1) Advisory - non-binding, 2) Seek feedback, 3) Research requests, 4) establish structure, and 5) Have an educational component on the budget process.

Discussion followed by **Paula Adriance** on the make-up of the FAC. She stated she would like to have her Board deliberate on that point.

Jack Carty discussed that the School Board has the overall responsibility of running the educational needs of the Community. The FAC has specific tasks and utilizing the process could be effective.

Ms. Drenkhahn would like to have Board representation of at least two members. Based on history and misinformation, the committee should mirror the School Board.

Jack Carty stated he would also like to have 2 members from the School Board primarily due to the possibility of absenteeism.

Dr. Shalager discussed the need to use the FAC to define problems and then use the expertise of the community to solve the items.

Paula Adriance stated she would like to see one member from the School Board on the FAC and the rest of the FAC equal representation from the community.

Howard Cunningham stated he would fully support two members from each community and some representation from the Board. He is not sure at this point how many at this time. He would like the opportunity to talk to other School Boards to discuss this.

Mr. Hanson stated he would like to investigate some best practices of other school boards and other school districts to see what they are doing and if they are successful.

Frank Michel discussed the need to know the composition and the mission of the committee and what it would like to accomplish before appointing members.

Dr. AndersEn stated the process tonight is *long* overdue and as a cooperative school district this discussion is absolutely necessary. We are going into new territory and this is a needed first step.

Frank opened the meeting for public comment

Jeanne Ryer, Sandwich, appointee from Sandwich to the Advisory Committee. Stated her concerns and that she would continue on the FAC if the purpose is meaningful, the “Hot Potato” items are not dumped on the group, and the group needs to proceed soon and move forward or else put closure to the committee.

George Serano, Meredith, previous member of the FAC. One of the things he learned as a taxpayer was how impressed he was with the leadership and the staff. He feels the FAC did slice through a lot of confusing data and made more sense of it. His reasons for signing the resignation letter were related to the comments that he heard continuously from the Board that you cannot run the school like a business and secondly was the absence of autonomy. He felt the committee wanted to come up with their own recommendations, but that became impossible. He recommends that if the FAC comes together again, the group should be able to come up with their own conclusions that are not “polluted” by the Board.

Chuck Palm, Meredith, previous FAC member, made the original motion to form a FAC. He discussed committees he had been a part of and his hope for the FAC was to be a productive committee in the community. He spoke to the process of how those previous committees worked and how they resulted in tremendous savings. He feels there could have been a charge and a direction given to the group and the opportunity for the group to do complete the job assigned and report back to the Board.

Phil McGowan commented on the composition of the committee and that it did not make a lot of sense to him. He discussed that in the Cooperative School Board District there is a section 195 that refers to the budget committee. Mr. McGowan feels the appointments to the Committee should not be done until a charge is made.

Paula Adriance read a letter written by Mr. Carl Johnson supporting the board’s position of equal representation and looks forward to a strong and successful partnership with the FAC.

Frank Michel closed the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Bob Flanders made a motion to adjourn at 7:45 p.m. Peter Miller seconded the motion. Motion passes 3 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Carol M. Granfield, Town Manager

Wynette DeGroot, Administrative Assistant

Frank S. Michel, Chairman

Robert C. Flanders

Peter N. Miller